Numb. 19

# The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

*Quicquid agunt Homines noſtri Farrago Libelli.*

From *Saturday May* 21. to *Tueſday May* 24. 1709.

*From my own Apartment, May* 23.

THERE is nothing can give a Man of any Conſideration greater Pain, than to ſee Order and Diſtinction laid aſide amongſt Men, eſpecially when the Rank (of which he himſelf is a Member) is intruded upon by ſuch as have no Pretence to that Honour. The Appellation of *Eſquire* is the moſt notoriouſly abus'd in this Kind of any Claſs amongſt Men, inſomuch that it is become almoſt the Subject of Deriſion: but I will be bold to ſay, this Behaviour towards it proceeds from the Ignorance of the People in the true Origine of it. I ſhall therefore, as briefly as poſſible, do my ſelf and all true *Eſquires* the Juſtice to look into Antiquity upon this Subject.

In the Firſt Ages of the World, before the Invention of Jointures and Settlements, when the noble Paſſion of Love had Poſſeſſion of the Hearts of Men, and the Fair Sex were not yet cultivated into the merciful Diſpoſition which they have ſhow'd in later Centuries, it was natural for great and Heroick Spirits to retire to Rivulets, Woods, and Caves, to lament their Deſtiny, and the Cruelty of the Fair Perſons who were deaf to their Lamentations. The Hero in this Diſtreſs was generally in Armour, and in a Readineſs to fight any Man he met with, eſpecially if diſtinguiſh'd by any extraordinary Qualifications, it being the Nature of Heroick Love to hate all Merit, leſt it ſhould come within the Obſervation of the Cruel One, by whom its own Perfections are neglected. A Lover of this Kind had always about him a Perſon of a Second Value, and ſubordinate to him, who could hear his Afflictions, carry an Inchantment for his Wounds, hold his Helmet when he was eating (if ever he did eat); or in his Abſence, when he was retir'd to his Apartment in any King's Palace, tell the Prince himſelf, or perhaps his Daughter, the Birth, Parentage, and Adventures, of his valiant Maſter. This truſty Companion was ſtiled his *Eſquire*, and was always fit for any Offices about him; was as gentle and chaſt as a Gentleman-Uſher, quick and active as an Equerry, ſmooth and eloquent as a Maſter of the Ceremonies. A Man thus qualified was the firſt, as the Ancients affirm, who was call'd an *Eſquire*; and none without theſe Accompliſhments ought to aſſume our Order: But, to the utter Diſgrace and Confuſion of the Heralds, every Pretender is admitted. To this Fraternity, are crept in Perſons the moſt Foreign to this courteous Inſtitution. I have taken an Inventory of all within this City, and look'd over all the Letters of the *Poſt-Office* for my better Information. There are of the *Middle-Temple*, including all in the Buttery Books, and in the Liſts of the Houſe, 4000. In the *Inner*, 5000. In the *King's-Bench-Walks*, the whole Buildings are inhabited by Eſquires only. The adjacent Street of *Eſſex*, from *Morris*'s Coffee-houſe, and the Turning towards the *Gracian*, you cannot meet one who is not an Eſquire, 'till you take Water. Every Houſe in *Norfolk* and *Arundel* Streets is govern'd alſo by a Squire, or his Lady. *Soho-Square*, *Bloomsbury-Square*, and all other Places, where the Floors riſe above Nine Foot, are ſo many Univerſities, where you enter your ſelves, and become of our Order. However, if this were the worſt of the Evil, it were to be ſupported, becauſe they are generally Men of ſome Figure and Uſe; tho' I know no Pretence that they have to an Honour which had its Riſe from Chivalry. But if you travel into the Counties of *Great Britain*, we are ſtill more impos'd upon by Innovation. We are indeed deriv'd from the Field: But ſhall that give Title to all that ride mad after Foxes, that holloo when they ſee an Hare, or venture their Necks full Speed after an Hawk, immediately to commence Eſquires? No, our Order is Temporate, Cleanly, Sober, and Chaſt; but theſe Rural Eſquires commit Immodeſties upon Hay-cocks, wear Shirts half a Week, and are drunk twice a Day. Theſe Men are alſo to the laſt Degree exceſſive in their Food: An Eſquire of *Norfolk* eats two Pounds of Dumplin every Meal, as if oblig'd to it by our Order: An Eſquire of *Hampſhire* is as ravenous in devouring Hogs-fleſh: One of *Eſſex* has as little Mercy on Calves. But I muſt take the Liberty to proteſt againſt them, and acquaint thoſe Perſons, that it is not the Quantity we eat, but the Manner of Eating, that ſhows a Squire. But above all, I am moſt offended at ſmall Quill-men, and Tranſcribing Clerks, who have all come into our Order, for no Reaſon that I know of, but that they can eaſily flouriſh it at the End of their Name. I'll undertake, that if you read the Superſcriptions to all the Offices in the Kingdom, you will not find three Letters directed to any but Eſquires. I have my ſelf a Couple of Clerks, and the Rogues make nothing of leaving Meſſages upon each other's Desk: One directs, *To Degory Gooſequill* Eſq; to which the other replies by a Note, when he goes out of the Way, *To Nehemiah Daſhwell* Eſq; *With Reſpect*. In a Word, it is now, *Populus Armigerorum*, A People of Eſquires. And I don't know but, by the late Act of Naturalization, Foreigners will aſſume that Title, as Part of the Immunity of being an *Engliſhman*. All theſe Improprieties flow from the Negligence of the *Heralds-Office*. Thoſe Gentlemen in Party-colour'd Habits do not ſo rightly, as they ought, underſtand themſelves; tho' they are dreſs'd Cap-a-pé in Hieroglyphicks, they are inwardly but ignorant Men. I ask'd an Acquaintance of mine, who is a Man of Wit, but of no Fortune, and is forc'd to appear as Jack-pudding on the Stage to a Mountebank: Prethee, *Jack*, Why is your Coat of ſo many Colours? He reply'd, I act a Fool, and this ſpotted Dreſs is to ſignify, that every Man living has a weak Place about him; for I am Knight of the Shire, and repreſent you all. I wiſh the Heralds would know as well as this Man does, in his Way, that they are to act for us in the Cafe of our Arms and Appellations: We ſhould not then be jumbled together in ſo promiſcuous and abſurd a Manner. I deſign to take this Matter into further Conſideration, and no Man ſhall be receiv'd as an

Eſquire,

Esquire, who cannot bring a Certificate, That he has conquer'd some Lady's obdurate Heart; That he can lead up a Country Dance, or carry a Message between her and her Lover, with Address, Secrecy, and Diligence. A Squire is properly born for the Service of the Sex, and his Credentials shall be sign'd by Three Toasts, and One Prude, before his Title shall be received in my Office.

*Will's Coffee-house, May 23.*

On Saturday last was presented, *The Busie Body*, a Comedy, written (as I have heretofore remark'd) by a Woman. The Plot and Incidents of the Play are laid with that Subtilty of Spirit which is peculiar to Females of Wit, and is very seldom well perform'd by those of the other Sex, in whom Craft in Love is an Act of Invention, and not, as with Women, the Effect of Nature and Instinct.

To Morrow will be acted a Play, call'd, *The Trip to the Jubilee*. This Performance is the greatest Instance that we can have of the irresistible Force of proper Action. The Dialogue in it self has something too low to bear a Criticism upon it: But Mr. *Wilks* enters into the Part with so much Skill, that the Gallantry, the Youth, and Gaiety of a young Man of a plentiful Fortune, is look'd upon with as much Indulgence on the Stage, as in real Life, without any of those Intermixtures of Wit and Humour, which usually prepossess us in Favour of such Characters in other Plays.

*St. James's Coffee-house, May 23.*

Letters from the *Hague* of the 23d Instant, *N. S.* say, Mr. *Walpole* (who is since arriv'd) was going with all Expedition to *Great Britain*, whither they doubted not but he carried with him the Preliminaries to a Treaty of Peace. The *French* Minister, Monsieur *Torsi*, has been observ'd in this whole Negotiation to turn his Discourse upon the Calamities sent down by Heaven upon *France*, and imputed the Necessities they were under to the immediate Hand of Providence, in inflicting a general Scarcity of Provision, rather than the superior Genius of the Generals, or the Bravery of the Armies against them. It would be impious not to acknowledge the Indulgence of Heaven to us; but at the same Time, as we are to love our Enemies, we are glad to see 'em mortified enough to mix Christianity with their Politicks. An Authentick Letter from Madam *Maintenon* to Monsieur *Torsi* has been stol'n by a Person about him, who has communicated a Copy of it to some of the Dependants of a Minister of the Allies. That Epistle is writ in the most Pathetick Manner imaginable, and in a Stile which shows her Genius, and has so long engross'd the Heart of this great Monarch.

SIR,

*I Receiv'd yours, and am sensible of the Address and Capacity with which you have hitherto transacted the great Affair under your Management. You well observe, that our Wants here are not to be conceal'd; and that it is Vanity to use Artifices with the knowing Men with whom you are to deal. Let me beg you therefore, in this Representation of our Circumstances, to lay aside Art, which ceases to be such when it is seen, and make Use of all your Skill, to gain us what Advantages you can from the Enemy's Jealousy of each other's Greatness; which is the Place where only you have Room for any Dexterity. If you have any Passion for your unhappy Country, or any Affection for your distress'd Master, come home with Peace. Oh Heav'n! Do I live to talk of* Lewis the Great *as the Object of Pity? The King shews a great Uneasiness to be inform'd of all that passes; but at the same Time, is fearful of every one who appears in his Presence, lest he should bring an Account of some new Calamity. I know not in what Terms to represent my Thoughts to you, when I speak of the King, with Relation to his Bodily Health. Figure to your self that Immortal Man, who stood in our Publick Places, represented with Trophies, Armour, and Terrors, on his Pedestal: Consider, the* Invincible, *the* Great, *the* Good, *the* Pious, *the* Mighty, *which were the usual Epithets we gave him, both in our Language, and Thoughts. I say, consider him whom you knew the most Glorious and Great of Monarchs; and now think you see the same Man an unhappy* Lazar, *in the lowest Circumstances of Human Nature it self, without Regard to the State from whence he is fallen. I write from his Bed-side: He is at present in a Slumber. I have many, many, Things to add; but my Tears flow too fast, and my Sorrow is too big for Utterance.*

I am, &c.

There is such a Veneration due from all Men to the Persons of Princes, that it were a Sort of Dishonesty to represent further the Condition which the King is in; but it is certain, That soon after the Receipt of these Advices, Monsieur *Torsi* waited upon his Grace the Duke of *Marlborough* and the Lord *Townshend*, and in that Conference gave up many Points, which he had before said were such, as he must return to *France* before he could answer.


*Advertisements.*

WHereas Mr. Lintott and others have publish'd several false and imperfect Editions of a late Poem, intitled, MUSCIPULA. By Mr. Holdsworth, of Magd. Col. Oxon. These are to certify, that the true Copy, with large Additions and Corrections, adorn'd with a Cut curiously engraven, will be publish'd next Week, by Edmund Curll, at the Peacock without Temple-Bar. N. B. The Works of the Earls of Rochester, and Roscommon: To which is added, a Collection of Original Poems, by the most eminent Hands; among which are, Baucis and Philemon, Mrs. Harris's Petition, and Cupid's Contrivance. By the Author of the Tale of a Tub. Pr. 5 s. A new Edition, being the correctest Extant, of Petronius Arbiter. Pr. 1 s. 6 d. Both Printed for E. Curll.

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